Ms. q. A. 1. 3

Whittier, the Quaker Poet.

I have chosen for my theme, this evening, one ~~whose place of residence is not far distant, and~~ whose genius and character are, I think, worthy of all admiration — John Greenleaf Whittier, the Quaker poet. And this will justify an introductory episode in regard to the origin and peculiarities of Quakerism.

In the month of July, 1624, there was born at Drayton, in Leicestershire, England, world-famous George Fox. His father was Christopher Fox, a weaver by trade, who lived so virtuous a life that his neighbors used to call him Righteous Christer. His mother was Mary Lago, "an upright woman, and of the stock of martyrs." From both sides of this parentage, therefore, contumacious, ~~protesting~~ dissenting, heretical, God-fearing blood flowed in his veins, qualifying him to be the champion of unlimited freedom of conscience, the apostle of religious liberty, a martyr-witness to the truth, and centuries in advance of his times. He received only the simplest rudiments of an education, being able to read, and to write a plain, coarse hand. But, from early youth, his spiritual intuitions were remark-

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able, and he assiduously endeavored to live a pure and righteous life. At twelve years of age, he was apprenticed to a shoemaker, who dealt also in wool and in cattle. His time, however, was chiefly occupied in tending sheep — an employment exactly adapted to his meditative turn of mind, in which he took great delight. His temperament was of a highly impressible nature, but only in regard to spiritualistic influences; for, while a youth, so extraordinary were his firmness and conscientiousness, that it was a proverb among his acquaintances, "If George says Verily, there is no altering him." He diligently read the Scriptures, fasted often, and was powerfully exercised in his mind upon religious matters. Singularly enough, he first reverently sought the advice and guidance of the priests, in connection with the established church, in his hours of darkness and temptation. The first one whom he consulted "bid him take tobacco, and sing psalms." The second one, accounted an experienced man, he found to be "like an empty hollow cask." This soon led him to see "that to be bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not enough to make a man a minister of Christ." Hence, his spirit began to be stirred within him, in view of the religious corruption of his times, as was that of Paul at

Athens. "Steeple-houses" were an abomination to him, and he boldly denied their alleged sanctity, placing them on the same level with all other buildings. He travelled in all directions, arraigning the priesthood of his day as hirelings, and wolves in sheep's clothing; and, consequently, rousing their fiercest enmity against him. At their instigation chiefly, he was frequently beaten with clubs, ~~sometimes with the Bible~~, stoned out of town, imprisoned in loathsome cells, and brutally treated in a thousand ways. So terrified were they at his coming, that they would often hide themselves to avoid an encounter with "the man in leather breeches," as he was styled. Here is a specimen of the treatment meted out to him in numerous instances. On one occasion, "he went into the ~~steeple-house~~ church, and there found the priest and the ~~chief~~ clerk of the parish in the chancel, to whom he began to speak; but they immediately fell upon him, and the clerk struck him with his bible so violently in the face, that the blood gushed out, and he bled exceedingly. Then the people thrust him out of the ~~steeple-house~~ church, beat and threw him down, and dragged him along the street, so that he was smeared with blood and dirt. ~~and his hat taken away.~~ When he got up again, he spoke to ~~the people~~ his persecutors, and showed them how they dishonored Christianity." On

4) On one ~~another~~ occasion, "he was dragged out of the town, and given up to the rage of the rude multitude, who did so terribly beat him with switches and staves, that at length fainting, he fell down upon the wet common; but recovering again, and being strengthened by an immediate power, he stood up, and stretching out his arms, said with a loud voice, "Strike again! Here are my arms, my head, and my cheeks!" On another occasion, "about forty men with staves, clubs, and fishing-poles, fell upon him, beating and punching him, and endeavoring to thrust him backward into the sea; but he, pressing on, was knocked down and stunned." On entering a place called Cockan, he was assailed with pitchforks, flails, and staves, the people crying, "Kill him! knock him in the head!" When in Scotland, he was told at Leith that the council had granted warrants to apprehend him, because he had not left the kingdom. His reply was, "What do you tell me of their warrants against me? If there were a cart-load of them, I do not heed them; for the Lord's power is over them all." Reminding one of the memorable declaration of heroic Luther, "I will go to Worms, though every tile upon their houses be a devil." No martyr ever suffered more serenely, after the pattern of Christ. His

courage and self-possession, his patience and persistency, never failed him in any emergency. His crime was — what every age has been disposed to treat with more or less vindictiveness — theological dissent and religious non-conformity. He testified strongly against a ceremonial worship, a hireling priesthood, and biblical idolatry, and taught that every man was enlightened by the "light within." His life was without a stain; his virtue of the most stringent character; his piety fervent and profound. He taught and exemplified the duty of carrying out, in the most literal sense, the precepts of Christ, "If any man will smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other also" — "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." On the 30th of October, 1650, he was committed to the house of correction at Derby, on the charge of "uttering and broaching divers blasphemous opinions." Gervas Bennet, one of the justices of the peace, who signed the mittimus for his arrest and imprisonment, and an Independent, "hearing that George Fox bade him, and those about him, tremble at the word of the Lord, took hold of this weighty expression with such an airy mind, that

from thence he took occasion to call him and his friends, scornfully, "Quakers" — which epithet soon run over all England, and spread across the Atlantic, and is still used, but now without any reproach.

Such was the founder, and such the origin of Quakerism. Beyond all parallel, it was the sublimest, purest, most peaceable, and most deeply spiritual movement that had been inaugurated in any land since the apostolic age.

Let us see how Quakerism was regarded and treated in New England, two centuries ago. In July, 1656, two Quaker women arrived in Boston harbor, before any law had been passed ~~on the subject~~ against Quakerism; yet their trunks were searched, their books (amounting to one hundred volumes) burnt in the market-place by the common hangman; they were closely imprisoned five weeks; no one was allowed to communicate with them, under a penalty of five pounds; they were deprived of all writing materials; stripped naked on pretence that they bore on their bodies the marks of witches, and otherwise barbarously treated, and finally sent back to England — the jailer keeping their beds and their bibles for his fees! Eight other men and women Quakers came over in a

few weeks afterward, and were treated in a similar manner. A law was then passed, prohibiting all masters of ships from bringing any Quaker into the colony, under heavy penalties. It is a noteworthy fact, that the first who dared to come over, after that enactment, were two women, both of whom were imprisoned. ~~and one of them, the illustrious Mary Dyer, was subsequently hung on Boston Common, for presuming to come into the colony a second time.~~ Next came one Mary Clark, who, leaving her husband and children in England, with missionary zeal and martyr courage crossed the stormy Atlantic, expressly to warn those bloody-minded persecutors to desist from their iniquity. Instead of doing this, they took her to the whipping-post, cruelly scourged her body, and cast her into prison. Nothing daunted by such treatment, two men next came to Boston, "where each of them received thirty stripes with a knotted whip of three cords, the hangman measuring his ground, and fetching his strokes with the greatest strength he could; which so cruelly cut their flesh, that a woman seeing it, fell down as dead. Then they were locked up in prison, and the jailer kept them three days without any food, not giving them so much as a draught of water; and so

close that none might come to speak with them, they lying on the boards without bed or straw. Thus they were kept nine weeks prisoners, without fire, in the cold winter season." Many other estimable men and women were barbarously whipped, in some instances their ears were cut off, they were branded with a red hot iron, and cast into prison, as though they had been guilty of the foulest crimes. Here is an order, issued by Edward Rawson, Colonial Secretary; — "To the marshal-general, or his deputy: You are to take with you the executioner, and repair to the house of correction, and there see him cut off the right ears of John Copeland, Christopher Holder, and John Rous, Quakers; in execution of the sentence of the court of assistants, for the breach of the law, entitled Quakers." By the same authority, a son and daughter of Lawrence and Cassandra Southwick were ordered to be sold as slaves either to Virginia or Barbadoes, because they refused to pay certain fines imposed upon them for "absenting themselves from the public ordinances," though this iniquitous command was happily frustrated in the end. The naked bodies of William Robinson and Marmaduke Stevenson, who were hanged on Boston Common,

were cast into a hole without any covering, a decent burial being denied them. [Mary Dyer] All this murderous persecution of an inoffensive and conscientious people was coolly defended by the implacable Rawson as "supported by the authority of the court, the laws of the country, and the law of God" (!) — adding, "we may rather persuade us to expect encouragement (!) and commendation (!!) from all prudent and pious men, than convince us of any necessity to apologize for the same"! What barbarity of spirit! what venomous religious animosity! what ruthless disregard of the rights of conscience! This inquisitorial "reign of terror" lasted until the close of 1661, when it was terminated by a decree of Charles the Second.

Two hundred years have rolled away, and on the same soil, among the descendants of the same race, with the same religious faith, what a marvellous change has taken place in the popular estimate of Quakerism! It has not only overcome all opposition, through meek endurance and peaceful suffering, but every where commands absolute respect, and has confessedly reached the highest point of organized moral and social excellence. The Quaker garb, which once indicated the victim to be hated and ostracised, is now protection and safeguard,

and elicits unusual deference. However, Quakerism, as a sect, has fulfilled its mission, and is passing away; but its high moral and spiritual testimonies will endure for ever. While it has done much in the cause of religious liberty and spiritual enlightenment, it has done nothing for art, learning, science, or philosophy, because it has lacked culture from the beginning. It has produced not a single ~~musician~~ scholar, not one ~~— only one~~ painter, (Benjamin West) — and but two poets — Bernard Barton, of England, whose effusions are characterised by tenderness and purity, rather than by power of imagination or loftiness of flight, and our own beloved and gifted Whittier, who, tested by the standard of moral heroism and universal philanthropy, has not his peer among ancient or modern bards. In the days of George Fox, music was so shamefully prostituted that he kindly sought to paralyze the faculty itself, instead of giving it a right direction. Unlike good old, sensible John Wesley, who said that "the devil had had the best tunes long enough," and therefore appropriated them to the service of the Lord, the early Quakers became morbidly averse to every stringed instrument, eschewed the singing of psalms and hymns, and treated the simplest melodies as profane. Human nature, however, is true to itself — in accordance with

the proverb, "If you drive it out at the door with a pitch-fork, it will come in at the window." The austerity and asceticism of the past are yielding to the growth of knowledge and the advance of mind. The Quaker dress is becoming modified, in many instances wholly discarded; Quaker clannishness is gradually disappearing; in many Quaker families, music has now its sweet voices and customary instruments; works of ~~art, painting and sculpture,~~ art, painting and sculpture and dancing is occasionally indulged are, to some extent, finding Quaker ~~patrons and admirers;~~ patrons and admirers; and from the prosaic bosom of Quakerism leaps into life the noblest and most meritorious poet of America!

"Our Society," says Elisha Bates, in his work on "the Doctrines of Friends," "think it right to abstain from the amusements of dancing and music, both because of their frequent connexion with places and circumstances which are highly objectionable; and because we conceive they can scarcely be entered into, without an improper employment of that time which we are required not to waste, but to pass in fear, and to redeem." In ~~the~~ his ~~admirable~~ work, ~~of the excellent William Penn~~ entitled "No Cross, no Crown," William Penn ~~Penn, he~~ quotes approvingly the language of the Waldenses on dancing, to this effect:— "Dancing is

John Greenleaf Whittier was born in Haverhill, on the 17th of December, 1807. His father's name was John Whittier, and his mother's, Abigail Hussey Whittier. His grandmother, on his father's side, was a Greenleaf of Newbury. He is to be classed among the self-made men of the world, having had ~~no~~ little schooling, except about ten or twelve weeks in a year. ~~The school was at a long distance, and often reached through storms and snow-drifts. Your worthy fellow-citizen, of antiquarian taste and universal kindness, Joshua Coffin, Esq., was his first teacher, to whom Whittier has dedicated one of his many felicitous effusions:—~~

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the devil's procession, and he is the guide, the middle, and the end of the dance. As many paces as a man maketh in dancing, so many paces doth he make to go to hell. In a dance, a man breaks the Ten Commandments of God. Women sin by singing and playing on instruments; for their songs bewitch the hearts of those that hear them with temporal delight, forgetting God; uttering nothing in their songs but lies and vanities." There is no distinction here between the legitimate use and a gross perversion of these things.

[See p. 10.]

(Omit)

"I, the urchin unto whom,
In that smoked and dingy room,
Where the district gave thee rule
O'er its ragged winter school,
Thou didst teach the mysteries
Of those weary A B C's, —
Where, to fill the very pause
Of thy wise and learned saws,
Through the cracked and crazy wall
Came the cradle-rock and squall,
And the goodman's voice, at strife
With his shrill and tipsy wife, —
Luring us by stories old,
With a comic unction told,
More than by the eloquence
Of thy birchen arguments
Doubtful gain, I fear), to look
With complacence on a book! —
Where the genial pedagogue
Half forgot his rogues to flog,
Citing tale or apologue
Wise and merry in its drift
As old Phædrus' two-fold gift,

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I, — the man of middle years,
In whose sable locks appears
Many a warning fleck of gray, —
Looking back to that far day,
And thy primal lessons, feel
Grateful smiles my lips unseal,
As, remembering thee, I blend
Olden teacher, present friend,
Wise with antiquarian search,
In the scrolls of state and church;
Named on history's title-page,
Parish-clerk and justice sage;
For the ferule's wholesome awe,
Wielding now the sword of law.

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Working out with eye and lip,
Riddles of old penmanship,
Patient as Belzoni there
Sorting out, with loving care,
Mummies of dead questions stripped
From their seven-fold manuscript!

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Whittier had no books, ~~and no means to obtain any~~, except a few Quaker journals, which, while they doubtless helped to develop his moral nature, contained nothing to excite his poetical genius — a genius which began to radiate in early childhood; chalk, and charcoal, and a shingle, being often substituted for pen, ink and paper, ~~owing to the straitened circumstances of his parents.~~ His father was a shoemaker and farmer combined, in moderate circumstances — a man in advance of his time, and remarkable for the soundness of his judgment, and freedom from popular errors of thinking; ~~and~~ but though he was gratified with the early ~~rhymes~~ promise of his son, he felt that ~~owing to his straitened circumstances he could do nothing to aid him, and he said that~~ something more practical than rhyming was desirable. ~~was necessary to keep the wolf (Want) from the door.~~ Accordingly, ~~in order to get the means of education,~~ John was put to learn the shoemaker's trade, like many an illustrious man before him. He industriously worked at his vocation for about two years, when he became a pupil at the Haverhill academy for the term of one year, and then kept school awhile.

My first attempt at editing a newspaper was in ~~this~~ my native place, Newburyport, in the summer of 1826. Going up stairs to my office, one day, I observed a letter lying near the door, to my address; which, on opening, I found to contain an original piece of poetry for my paper,

"The Free Press." The ink was very pale, the handwriting very small; and, having at that time a horror of newspaper "original poetry," — which has rather increased ~~and~~ than diminished with the lapse of time, — my first impulse was to tear it in pieces, without reading it; the chances of rejection, after its perusal, being as ninety-nine to one. For it seriously concerns all who are disposed to try their hand at poetizing to know, that there may be the most accurate measure and rhyme, without the remotest approach to poetry, as some one has facetiously illustrated this in the following lines: —

"One morn when earth was free from snow,
And streams had not forgot to flow,
A man went forth to plough and hoe —
His name was Ichabod Beverly.

Tall was his form — his hair coal black,
Hung like a lynch-pin down his back;
An eel-skin held it in its sack,
With gripe of French fraternity.

His hat was in condition sad,

Whate'er his thoughts were, good or bad;
He there recorded all he had —
Of chalk was made his memory.

He met a man — and I know who —
Said he, "Kind friend, how do you do?"
"I'm pretty well — how is't with you?"
"I thank you, I am cleverly."

Such, I thought, might prove the effusion which had been so mysteriously dropped near my office-door; but, summoning resolution to read it, I was equally surprised and gratified to find it above mediocrity, and so gave it a place in my journal. Week after week brought me other pieces, equally creditable, in the same mysterious manner, the author remaining incog., which were published with an editorial commendation. As I was anxious to find out the writer, my post-rider one day divulged the secret — stating that he had dropped the letters in the manner described, and that they were written by a Quaker lad, named Whittier, who was daily at work on the shoemaker's bench, with hammer and lapstone, at East Haverhill. Jumping into a vehicle, I lost

no time in driving to see the youthful rustic bard, who came into the room with shrinking diffidence, almost unable to speak, and blushing like a maiden. Giving him some words of encouragement, I addressed myself more particularly to his parents, and urged them with great earnestness to grant him every possible facility for the development of his remarkable genius. Thus encouraged, Whittier continued to occupy a place in the poetical department of "The Free Press," during its brief existence; ~~his~~ effusions ~~being~~ were widely copied into other journals, and complimented in a flattering manner, the name of their youthful author then being disclosed to the public. Thus was laid the foundation of that honorable fame, which he has so nobly achieved, which shall grow and brighten with the flight of time. I confess, these reminiscences are to me the source of inexpressible delight, and accelerate the pulsations of my heart; ~~and I am sure you will not only pardon, but thank me for recalling them.~~

In 1828, Whittier removed to Boston, and became the editor of a weekly journal, entitled "The American Manufacturer," acquitting himself in a very creditable manner. Subsequently he went to Hartford, Connecticut, and assumed the editorial charge

of the "New England Weekly Review," as the successor of George D. Prentice, Esq., the present editor of the Louisville Journal — remaining there two years.

In the summer of 1833, he first openly committed himself to the cause of the imbruted and fettered millions in our land, in a pamphlet of touching pathos and stirring eloquence — a cause to which he has mainly consecrated his muse since that period, and for which he shall be remembered with gratitude and admiration by an unbiassed and appreciative posterity.

After the death of his father, he returned to the family homestead, and carried on the farm till 1836-7; when he accepted an invitation to become the editor of the "Pennsylvania Freeman," the official organ of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society. It was during his residence acting temporarily as editor of the Haverhill Gazette, and relinquishing his trust in the following prophetic valedictory: (We)

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"During his connection with this paper, the undersigned has endeavored to maintain those principles of impartial liberty, which form the basis of our republican institutions. Regarding domestic slavery

as a sin against God – a hideous anomaly in a government professedly free – blighting and mildew to the moral influence of our professions of free-principles upon the nations of Europe – the curse in the Church – discord and danger in the State – in all things evil and full of wrong unimaginable, he had felt it to be his duty to bear a constant and consistent testimony against it. He trusts that his labors have not been altogether in vain. Never, again, until Slavery ceases to defile and curse our republic, will the spirit of Free Inquiry and Christian Liberty slumber. ~~in Essex County.~~ Like the Greek fire, it will blaze with fiercer intensity for every effort which is made to extinguish it; and the exercise of the rights of Free Discussion, and of Petition and Remonstrance against Slavery, will increase in proportion as those rights are called in question, or denied. Cruel and lamentable as has been our indifference to the woes and wrongs of Slavery, we are not yet prepared to introduce it into the North, nor to sacrifice our own liberties for its safety and perpetuity. And it is now evident to every

one who has watched the progress of the present struggle, that it must terminate in the freedom of the slaves, or the slavery of the free. The efforts of the enemies of liberty are indeed no longer disguised. We can see, as it were, the smoke of their furnaces — we can ~~hear~~ the sound of their hammers, forging fetters for our limbs; we can see the very twisting of the cords which are to bind us with the bondmen. God forbid that we should surrender, at a crisis like this, one of those rights which He has given us! If the malaria and the blight of Slavery must be extended yet wider, O let it not smite with barrenness the moral beauty of New England. If oppression requires new victims, let not the land of the Pilgrims pass its own children through the fire to Moloch."

In 1837-8, Whittier accepted an invitation to edit "The Pennsylvania Freeman," the official organ of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society. It was during his residence in Philadelphia, that the noble hall which was erected principally by the mechanics of that city, and dedicated to "Virtue, Liberty, Independence," was, at the instigation of Southern desperadoes, and at the connivance of the city authorities, deliberately given to the consuming fire, even before the sun went down in his circuit, and utterly destroyed.

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While editor of the Freeman, he proffered an exchange with the New York Gazette, which was rejected by the latter in the following style:—

"An abolition paper called the *Pennsylvania Freeman*, published in Philadelphia, came to us yesterday requesting the editor of this paper by name to exchange with it. The Freeman is conducted by John G. Whittier, a man for whom we feel, aside from his abolitionism, the most sincere esteem. We believe him to be as amiable a man as lives, and we know him to be a man of fine talents; but we cannot exchange with him, nevertheless. We do not wish to see his paper. Whenever he will edit a newspaper free from what we deem the most pestilential doctrines that have ever yet thrown their curse over the country, nothing will gratify us more than the interchange of courtesies and friendship. At present we wish to retain our estimation of his good qualities, without endangering that estimate, by a weekly survey of his bad principles.

About two numbers of his abolition journal would upset all the favorable opinions that we have of him now.

N. Y. Daily Gazette.

☞ We assure the editor of the Gazette that we will cheerfully run the risk of any ill consequences to our reputation for "*amiability*" resulting from his perusal of our paper, if by so doing we can induce him to do justice to our unpopular principles, and speak of them with as little prejudice as he does of our unpopular selves. We ask no favor, as an individual, if it must be extended to us at the expense of the cause of truth and holy liberty, to which we have pledged our humble advocacy. If abolitionism "is the most pestilential doctrine which has ever thrown its curse over the country," we are personally guilty. We claim no exemption from the pains and penalties of the stormy and fierce denunciations of *abolitionists* by the editor of the N. Y. Gazette, *late of South Carolina*. Side by side with the Tappans, the Garrisons, the Goodells, of our cause we are willing to stand or fall. Our name and reputation may as well as theirs be cast out as evil. Not without a strong sense of duty urging us onward have we placed ourself in opposition to public prejudice and feeling. We court no martyrdom. We have no feeling in common with Dean Swift's fanatic who craved of the bystanders "a kick for the Lord's sake." We are not indifferent to the good opinion of our fellow citizens. We would yield for its sake every thing but conscientious principle, and our idea of right. These we cannot relinquish; and "public opinion" and "the brotherhood" may as well know it first as last.

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Read this.

For several years past, in consequence of his debilitated state of health, Whittier has lived almost in a state of seclusion, on the banks of that beautiful and romantic river, the Merrimack, which he has made famous in song; sending out, from time to time, the ~~varied~~ brilliant emanations of his glorious genius, through various mediums of popular communication. Two hundred years ago, if he had then lived in this Commonwealth, he would have been cast into prison, or had his ears cut off, or been put to death on the gallows with Mary Dyer, for being a Quaker! Now, there is none more beloved, or more truly respected, in the old Bay State, than himself. The General Court, instead of decreeing his banishment, unanimously elect him to the honorable position of a member of the Board of Overseers of Harvard University! ~~Verily, "the world moves."~~

"So truth doth conquer at the last,
As round and round we run;
And ever the right comes uppermost,
And ever is justice done."

~~God bless and long preserve the gentle, upright, manly, liberty-loving Quaker poet of Massachusetts!~~

Genius, however ~~soaring~~ resplendent, divorced from self-respect and purity of life, — as in the case of Byron, for instance, — loses more than half its brightness, and excites sadness rather than admiration. What proves a man is not what he utters, but what he does. The daily repetition of the Lord's prayer is no evidence of piety. The acceptance of the Golden Rule in the abstract is one thing; reducing it to practice quite another. The same words, from the lips of one man, are as the whistling wind; from those of another, they are like cannon-balls or bomb-shells. It is not so much what is said, as who says it — what is the spirit that declares it. Character is more than genius; but genius allied to character therein finds sanctification, and is truly godlike. The private life of Whittier has been marked by such uniform integrity of soul — such purity of thought, expression and conduct — such reverence for the truth, abhorrence of the wrong, and love of the right — such womanly gentleness, manly courage, and modest simplicity — that it impregnates and vitalizes all his writings. His merit is not chiefly lyrical, though in this respect unequalled; but, primarily and essentially, it lies in the fact that he has not lived merely for a literary reputation; that

what he has most desired has been to do his duty as a man — all else being incidental ~~or~~ and subordinate. Of what other distinguished poet in this country can this be as truly said? Lowell, perhaps, may take rank next, if the shades at Cambridge do not prove to him enchanted ground. Bryant, Longfellow, Percival, Halleck, Holmes, Willis — each of these excels in his own chosen path; but, as to substance of thought, electric power of expression, moral elevation of sentiment, fearlessness of utterance, benevolence of purpose, and service to the cause of freedom and humanity, Whittier outweighs them all, and has no peer, I think, among ~~the~~ ancient or modern poets. He is the poet reformer and lyric prophet of the world, without taint of fanaticism or stain of human folly. His present reputation, though large, is no test of its future dimensions. In the nature of things, the nation with whose consummate, all-pervading, organized iniquity he is untiringly in conflict, and on whose naked heart he is constantly "scattering the living coals of truth," cannot appreciate his worth, or place the laurel wreath upon his brow. In one half of the country his writings are contraband, because they are so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of liberty, and the sentiment of human brother-

hood; in the other, they are excluded from many a circle, and many a library, for the same reason. With reference to this fact, in a truly Miltonic strain, he nobly and touchingly says —

"I, who have spoken for freedom at the cost
Of some weak friendships, or some paltry prize
Of name or place, and more than I have lost
Have gained in wider reach of sympathies,
And free communion with the good and wise, —
May God forbid that I should even boast
Such easy self-denial, or repine
That the strong pulse of health no more is mine;
That, overworn at noonday, I must yield
To other hands the gleaning of the field, —
A tired on-looker through the day's decline.
For blest beyond deserving still, and knowing
That kindly Providence its care is showing
In the withdrawal as in the bestowing,
Scarcely I dare for more or less to pray."

This is the Christ-like acceptance of the Cross — the triumph-song of the martyr spirit. Not less thrilling, on the same subject, are the following lines: —

"Not mine alone the task to speak
Of comfort to the poor and weak,
And dry the tear on Sorrow's cheek;

But, mingled in the conflict warm,
To pour the fiery breath of storm
Through the harsh trumpet of Reform;

To brave Opinion's settled frown,
From ermined robe and saintly gown,
While wrestling reverenced Error down.

Founts gushed beside my pilgrim way,
Cool shadows on the greensward lay,
Flowers swung upon the bending spray.

And, broad and bright, on either hand,
Stretched the green slopes of Fairy land,
With Hope's eternal sunbow spanned;

Whence voices called me like the flow,
Which on the listener's ear will grow,
Of forest streamlets soft and low.

And gentle eyes, which still retain
Their picture on the heart and brain,
Smiled, beckoning from that path of pain.

In vain! – nor dream, nor rest, nor pause
Remain for him who round him draws
The battered mail of Freedom's cause.

From youthful hopes – from each green spot
Of young Romance, and gentle Thought,
Where storm and tumult enter not –

From each fair altar, where belong
The offerings Love requires of Song,
In homage to her bright-eyed throng –

With soul and strength, with heart and hand,
I turned to Freedom's struggling band –
To the sad Helots of our land.

What marvel, then, that Fame should turn
Her notes of praise to those of scorn –
Her gifts reclaimed – her smiles withdrawn?"

No marvel at all, O true-hearted follower of Fox and Penn, that all this should happen unto thee! But, in losing thy reputation for dear Liberty's sake, thou shalt find it. True fame is not existing public opinion, or present popular appreciation; it is not born of fashion or conformity; the pathway to its ~~pathway~~ temple is not strewed with flowers, but with briers and thorns; it is won only through heroic endurance and generous self-sacrifice.

It is delightful and refreshing to find, that though thus earnestly in conflict with the ~~great overshadowing~~ man-imbruting tyranny which curses and imperils the safety of our land, and though constitutionally suffering from bodily debility, Whittier no where shows any morbid tendency of mind. No matter how dark the overshadowing clouds; he is never despondent or faint-hearted. ~~What faith is here expressed!~~ If tempted, in the presence of all-prevailing injustice, to indulge in bitterness of heart or feelings of despair, a sense of his own human imperfection tempers his utterances. To quote his own words:

"Maddened by Earth's wrong and evil,
Lord! I cried in sudden ire,
From thy right hand, clothed with thunder,
Shake the bolted fire!

Love is lost, and Faith is dying;
With the brute the man is sold;
And the dropping blood of labor
Hardens into gold."

While in this inflamed mood of mind, he says
But, immediately "a solemn Voice within" responds —

"Earnest words must needs be spoken
When the warm heart bleeds or burns
With its scorn of wrong, or pity
For the wronged, by turns.

But, by all thy nature's weakness,
Hidden faults and follies known,
Be thou, in rebuking evil,
Conscious of thine own.

Not the less shall stern-eyed Duty
To thy lips her trumpet set,
But with harsher blasts shall mingle
Wailings of regret."

Such is ever the spirit of the true reformer.

Equally remarkable is Whittier for his religious catholicity of spirit, and entire freedom from sectarian intolerance, though strongly attached to his own peculiar mode of faith. If at any time he arraigns the priesthood, it is not for their theological opinions, but for their complicity with crime. In regard to all such, his cry is —

"Feed fat, ye locusts, feed!
And in your tasselled pulpits thank the Lord
That, from the toiling bondman's utter need,
Ye pile your own full board!

Woe to the priesthood! woe
To those whose hire is with the price of blood —
Perverting, darkening, changing as they go,
The searching truths of God!

Their glory and their might
Shall perish; and their very names shall be
Vile before all the people, in the light
Of a world's liberty!"

But no one has been more prompt to recognize and honor the faithful occupant of the pulpit than himself. Describing an interview which he in company with his English Quaker friend, Joseph Sturge, once had with the lamented Channing, he says—

"His few, brief words were such as move
The human heart—the Faith-sown seeds
Which ripen in the soil of love
To high heroic deeds.

No bars of sect or clime were felt—
The Babel strife of tongues had ceased—
And at one common altar knelt
The Quaker and the priest.

And not in vain: with strength renewed,
And zeal refreshed, and hope less dim,
For that brief meeting, each pursued
The path allotted him."

What a beautiful exemplification of Christian charity, which regards not the verbal creed, but the noble life!

pp 33, 34

~~And~~ No less beautiful and cheering are the views of Whittier on ~~this~~ the subject of mortality, in his lines to the memory of ~~the noble~~ Follen, ~~the devoted advocate of the struggling cause of freedom on both sides of the Atlantic.~~

"'Tis something to a heart like mine
To think of thee as living yet;
To feel that such a light as thine
Could not in utter darkness set.

Less dreary seems the untried way,
Since thou hast left thy footprints there,
And beams of mournful beauty play
Round the sad Angel's sable hair.

Thou livest, Follen! — not in vain
Hath thy fine spirit meekly borne
The burthen of Life's cross of pain,
And the thorned crown of suffering worn."

And again, in another effusion, describing that great ~~change~~ and wonderful transition through which all must sooner or later pass, he finely says —

"So when Time's veil shall fall asunder,
The soul may know
No fearful change, nor sudden wonder,
Nor sink the weight of mystery under,
But with the upward rise, and with the vastness grow."

And all we shrink from now may seem
No new revealing;
Familiar as our childhood's stream,
Or pleasant memory of a dream,
The loved and cherished Past upon the new life stealing.

Serene and mild the untried light
May have its dawning;
And, as in Summer's northern night
The evening and the dawn unite,
The sunset hues of Time blend with the soul's new morning."

Again, in those exquisite lines to a friend on the death of a beloved sister, how much of pious trust and peaceful resignation is compressed in the follow stanzas:—

Pp. 37, 61 omitted

I would rather be the writer of lines like these, so thoroughly humane and gloriously divine, than the author of the Iliad or the Æneid.

But it is as the early, intrepid, soul-quickening advocate of the cause of that unhappy race in our land, who have for two long centuries been ~~robbed~~ peeled, meted out, and trodden under foot, and who are still clanking their chains, and grinding in the Southern house of bondage, that Whittier will be most gratefully and honorably remembered by posterity. His many poetical appeals — full of pathos and electric fire — blending the thunder of moral denunciation with the gentle tones of pity and forgiveness — mingling the ~~martial strains and~~ clarion notes of Lexington and Concord with the solemn strains of prophetic inspiration — have been rehearsed by pulpit vicinport and public lecturer, in popular gatherings and in private circles, at the fireside and on the platform, by the singing sea and among our mountain fastnesses, ~~melting~~ making the hearts of men grow liquid as water, awakening the sluggist, inspiring the timid, confirming the doubting, and marshalling a host of the true and tried on the side of down-trodden freedom — and carrying confusion and dismay into the ranks of its enemies. Take an example:

"What, ho! — our countrymen in chains!
The whip on woman's shrinking flesh!
Our soil yet reddening with the stains,
Caught from her scourging, warm and fresh!
What! mothers from their children riven!
What! God's own image bought and sold!
Americans to market driven,
And bartered as the brute for gold!

Go — let us ask of Constantine
To loose his grasp on Poland's throat;
And beg the lord of Mahmoud's line
To spare the struggling Suliote —
Will not the scorching answer come
From turbaned Turk and scornful Russ —
"Go, loose your fettered slaves at home —
Then turn, and ask the like of us!"

Just God! and shall we calmly rest,
The Christian's scorn — the heathen's mirth —
Content to live the lingering jest
And by-word of a mocking Earth?
Shall our own glorious land retain

Massachusetts is not responsible for the sins of Carolina or Virginia; but she can make her own soil free to every hunted fugitive that comes to her for safety and protection — she must, she can, and she will do this. It is the mandate of God that she should "hide the outcast, and bewray not him that wandereth." The will of God be done! On this subject, the people are moving with a common impulse, without reference to sect or party, as they rush to put out a conflagration that threatens to consume the city. They are ~~at this moment~~ demanding of the Legislature, with a solemnity and earnestness that cannot safely be trifled with or disregarded, the passage of a law, prohibiting the hunting of men, women and children on ~~the~~ our soil, and declaring that no man shall be tried to determine the question, whether his brains and body and soul belong to him, or to another like him — that no slave shall be dragged from the Commonwealth back to his fetters, without the claimant can first show "a bill of sale from the Almighty," duly authenticated by the court of heaven. The language of Whittier is every where on the lips of the people, from the sands of Cape Cod to the hills of Berkshire, in response to the inhuman demands of the South upon us —

We hunt your bondmen, flying from Slavery's hateful hell—
Our voices, at your bidding, take up your bloodhounds' yell—
We gather, at your summons, above our fathers' graves,
From Freedom's holy altar-horns to tear your wretched slaves!

Thank God! not yet so vilely can Massachusetts' bow,
The spirit of her early time is with her even now;
Dream not because her pilgrim blood moves slow, and calm, and cool,
She thus can stoop her chainless neck, her sisters' slave and tool!

All that a *sister* State should do, all that a *free* State may,
Heart, hand and purse we proffer, as in our early day;
But that one dark, loathsome burden ye must stagger with alone,
And reap the bitter harvest which ye yourselves have sown!

The voice of Massachusetts! Of her free sons and daughters—
Deep calling unto deep aloud—the sound of many waters!
Against the burden of that voice what tyrant power shall stand?
No fetters in the Bay State! No slave upon her land!

Yes!

~~But for us and for our children, the vow which we have given~~
~~For Freedom and Humanity is registered in heaven:~~
~~*No slave-hunt in our borders—no pirate on our strand!*~~
~~*No fetters in the Bay State—no slave upon our land!*~~

~~In view of the passage of such a law is now demanded by the popular voice, the poet addresses Massachusetts in the following lofty strain:—~~

If I have not wearied you beyond further endurance, bear with me a few moments longer, and I will relieve your patience. There are ~~two~~ three other brief pieces of this heaven-inspired, liberty-loving Quaker bard, that are so admirable on the score of pictorial beauty, graphic description, and soul-electrifying power, and so well calculate to increase our self-respect, ~~noble~~ and hatred of oppression, ~~manhood~~, and love for our dear old Commonwealth, and deep concern for the welfare of our most guilty but still cherished country, that I feel unwilling to conclude this lecture without reciting them. The first one is entitled "The Yankee Girl," and will bear repetition to the end of time:—

(Read slips.)

Let every Yankee girl have these lines not only committed to memory, but engraved upon her conscience and heart, and she will then be able to be, age, and also deserve to be the mother of men — "men who know their rights, and knowing, dare maintain them."

But the poet makes his appeal to the manhood as well as to the womanhood of the Commonwealth. In the spirit of Hampden and Sidney, and of all the patriotic past, he exclaims —

"O my God!" &c. (see slip.)

That trumpet-call has been heard all along our ocean border and penetrated all our mountain fastnesses, and it shall save the Commonwealth!

I conclude by giving you those memorable lines of Whittier, which were written in a moment of the highest inspiration, at the time when the sacred right of petition was first cloven down in Congress, and the discussion of slavery was denounced as a treasonable act; when "the old man eloquent," John Quincy Adams, of immortal memory, and the veteran Giddings, stood up undauntedly on the floor of the House, and sublimely vindicated freedom of speech and the right of petition at the imminent peril of their lives: —

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1. "Now, by our fathers' ashes!" &c.

2. "Is the old Pilgrim spirit," &c.

3. "No! – when our land," &c.

4. "Shall our New England," &c.

5. "Oh, no! – methinks," &c.

6. "From her rough coasts," &c.

7. "From the free fire-side," &c.

8. "From each and all," &c.

9. "Startling and stern," &c.

10. Sons of the best of fathers! will ye falter
With all they left ye periled and at stake?
Ho! once again, on Freedom's holy altar,
The fire awake!

"She sings by her wheel at that low cottage-door,
Which the long evening shadow is stretching before
With a music as sweet as the music which seems
Washed softly and faint in the ear of our dreams!

How brilliant and mirthful the light of her eye,
Like a star glancing out from the blue of the sky!
And lightly and freely her dark tresses play
O'er a brow and a bosom as lovely as they!

Who comes in his pride to that low cottage-door —
The haughty and rich to the humble and poor?
'Tis the great Southern planter — the master who waves
His whip of dominion o'er hundreds of slaves.

"Nay, Ellen — for shame! Let those Yankees feel shame,
Who would pass for our slaves with a change of their [skins;]

Let them toil as they will at the loom or the wheel,
Too stupid for shame, and too vulgar to feel!

But thou art too lovely and precious a gem
To be bound to their burdens and sullied by them —
For shame, Ellen, shame! — cast thy bondage aside
And away to the South, as my blessing and pride.

(Yes, come to my home, where my servants shall all)
(Defer at thy bidding, and come at thy call;
They shall hail thee as mistress with trembling, and a
And each wish of thy heart shall be felt as a law.

(Yes, come) where no winter thy footsteps can wing
(But where flowers and blossoms are ever in bloom,
And the lemons and oranges

Let them toil as they will at the loom or the wheel,
Too stupid for shame, and too vulgar to feel!

But thou art too lovely and precious a gem!
To be bound to their burdens and sullied by them!
For shame, Ellen, shame! — cast thy bondage aside,
And away to the South, as my blessing and pride!

Oh, come where no winter thy footsteps can wring,
But where flowers are blossoming all the year long,
Where the shade of the palm-tree is over my home,
And the lemon and orange are white in their bloom!

Oh, come to my home, where my servants shall all
Wait at thy bidding, and come at thy call;
They shall heed thee as mistress with trembling fear,
And each wish of thy heart shall be felt as a law.

Oh, could ye have seen her – that pride of our girls –
Arise and cast back the dark wealth of her curls,
With a scorn in her eye which the gazer could feel,
And a glance like the sunshine that flashes on steel!

"Go back, haughty Southron! thy treasures of gold
Are dim with the blood of the hearts thou hast sold;
Thy home may be lovely, but round it I hear
The crack of the whip and the footsteps of fear!

And the sky of the South may be brighter than ours;
And greener thy landscapes, and fairer thy flowers;
But, dearer the blast round our mountains which raves,
Than the sweet summer zephyr which breathes over slaves!

Full low at thy bidding thy negroes may kneel,
With the iron of bondage on spirit and heel.
Yet know that the Yankee girl sooner would be
In fetters with them, than in freedom with thee!"

Probably written in early spring of 1859. Reference to new Personal Liberty Bill pending in that year.

See Mss letter of Whittier (1858, 1859?) replying to W.L.G. for suggestions about himself.

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